



SOCIETY OF CARDIOVASCULAR & INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY

10201 Lee Highway, Suite 500, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 (703) 691-1805 [FAX] (703) 691-1855
<http://www.scvir.org> [e-mail] info@scvir.org

March 15, 2001

The Honorable John McCain
SR-241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0303

Dear Senator McCain:

The Society of Cardiovascular & Interventional Radiology (SCVIR)* is writing in support of the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001 (S.283). The bill contains important and needed patient protections such as: access to specialty care, independent and qualified external review, and the free exchange of information between patients and their physicians.

Patients receive the best possible care when they have access to services offered by specialists. Patients must have access to those physicians who are the most appropriately trained to provide treatment. Furthermore, these physicians must be able to provide continuous access to the patient where the patient's condition may be life-threatening or entail ongoing treatment.

Given the rapid advances in medicine, the bill recognizes that an external appeals process must base its decision on the medical necessity and appropriateness of a service based on the best available medical information. The admission into evidence of the treating physician's professional opinion, the results of professionally recognized studies, professional consensus conferences, and practice and treatment guidelines are crucial to ensuring that treatment decisions are based on the judgment of the treating physician and state-of-the-art medicine. When deciding who is "qualified" to conduct an independent external review, SCVIR believes that specialty, training, and familiarity with the procedure in question should be paramount.

SCVIR also supports the removal of "gag rules" in health plans that prevent or limit the ability of physicians to advise patients of treatment options or accessing medical treatment that in the view of the physician is most appropriate for the patient. This is an important patient protection and allows a patient to make an informed choice about treatment alternatives or to access those physicians that can provide the most appropriate care for the patient.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001 (S.283). If you or your staff would like more information on SCVIR or interventional radiology, please feel free to contact Michael R. Mabry, Director of Health Economics and Policy, at 800-488-7284.

Sincerely,

Curtis Bakal, MD, MPH
President, SCVIR

*SCVIR is a professional society of more than 3,800 physicians who specialize in interventional or minimally invasive procedures. SCVIR is a non-profit, national scientific organization deeply committed to its mission to improve health and the quality of life through the practice of cardiovascular and interventional radiology. The Society promotes education, research, and communication in the field while providing strong leadership in the development of health care policy.